BLUE BEETLE
12¢
JUNE
BLUE BEETLE
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BLUE BEETLE bugs the SQUIDS!
WHO is the QUESTION?

the BLUE BEETLE

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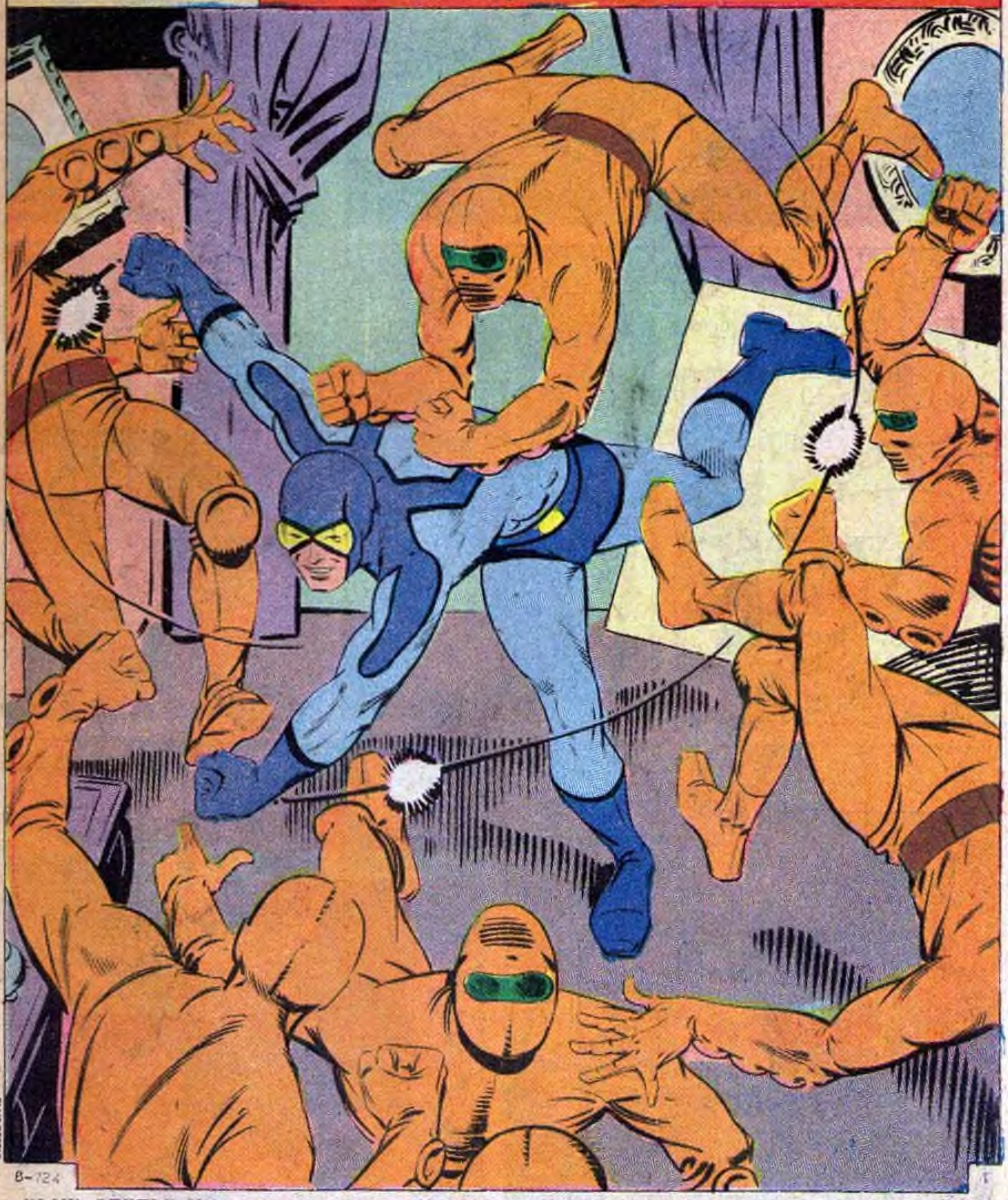
LETTERED BY: A. MACHINE

COME WITH US AS THE ALL-NEW BLUE BEETLE...

BUGS THE SQUIDS



BLUE BEETLE Vol. 1, No. 1, June, 1967, published bimonthly by Charlton Comics Group at Charlton Building, Derby, Conn. 06418. Application for Second Class mailing privileges will be applied for at Derby, Conn. 06418.

THE GATHERING DARKNESS OF LATE EVENING FALLS UPON THE HUB CITY WATERFRONT AS...

WE SHOULD ALMOST BE THERE.

THE BOYS KNOW THE SIGNAL. I'LL SCOUT AHEAD TO MAKE SURE NO ONE'S AROUND!

ALL CLEAR! HUSTLE IT UP BUT KEEP QUIET! GET YOUR AQUA-LUNGS OFF AND START CLIMBING!

CAREFUL, IT'S A *LONG DROP!* REMEMBER KEEPING YOUR FIST TIGHT MAKES THE SUCTION CUPS HOLD FAST!

THE WEIRD BAND MAKES ITS WAY SILENTLY UP THE SHEER WALL OF THE FASHIONABLE WATERFRONT APARTMENT BUILDING...

HA! C'MON BOYS ...LET'S THROW A PARTY OF OUR OWN!

EEEK! IT'S THAT HORRID *SQUID GANG!!*

ALL RIGHT, FOLKS, IT'S SHOW TIME! START PEELING OFF THE JEWELRY AND EMPTYING YOUR WALLETS!

OH, NO! IT'S *THE BLUE BEETLE!*

SO DON'T COMPLAIN, BUDDY... NOBODY INVITED YOU EITHER!

GREETINGS ...FROM ONE PARTY-CRASHER TO ANOTHER!

LIVE IT UP WHILE YOU CAN, SQUIDS ...PRISON LIFE IS SOOOO DULL!

GOT MY SUCTIONS ON HIM!

HEY! CUT THAT OUT! THE VIEW WAS ALL RIGHT FROM WHERE I WAS!

UNNNH! HURRY... NAIL HIM! I...I CAN'T HOLD HIM UP FOREVER!

THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, BUT...

I INSIST ON HANDLING YOUR GANG ON MY OWN!

GET HIM! ...BEFORE HE GETS TO HIS FEET!

I GOT... UNNGH!

YOU BOTH GOT...ONE APIECE!

I HOPE THE POLICE DON'T ARRIVE TOO SOON... THIS IS GETTING *REAL EXCITING!*

YOU BUTTED IN FOR THE LAST TIME, BLUE BEETLE!

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SQUIDS ...THIS PARTY TOO ROUGH FOR YOU?

I'LL GET HIM! AN' I WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE JOE DID...

...BY TRYIN' TO HOLD ONTO HIM...WHOOMP!

OOPS!

HERE COME THE POLICE!

C'MON, BOYS... LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!

NOT WITHOUT ME!

COME BACK, BLUE BEETLE ... *STOP!*

GOTTA BRING THE BUG DOWN FAST... 'FORE I SPLATTER THE SIDEWALK!

I GUESS IT'S TOO LATE TO WORRY ABOUT WHAT'LL HAPPEN IF I MISS THE HAND-HOLD!

NOT BAD...CONSIDERING THAT I DON'T PRACTICE THIS STUNT TOO OFTEN!

STEADY, OLD BOY!

STICK AROUND, SQUIDS! I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN!

CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT TWO PAGES

HANG ON! A BULLET MIGHT MISS, BUT THIS GUN... *NEVER!*

ALL RIGHT, SQUIDS, YOU WANT TO CALL IT QUITS OR DO I HAVE TO KNOCK A FEW OF YOU OFF THE WALL?

YOU'LL HAVE TO FIND US FIRST!

COUGH COUGH FOG GUN... ALMOST COUGH LET GO...

...CAN'T SEE ... BETTER STOP THE BUG AND PULL MYSELF UP BEFORE WE SMASH INTO THE BUILDING!

THAT BIT BOUGHT THEM ENOUGH TIME. THE SQUIDS ARE TAKING TO THE WATER. OKAY, BUG, DOWN WE GO...

...HOPE THE BUG'S ANTENNA CAN PICK THEM UP...BEFORE THEY SCATTER!

NOTHING! IF I COULD JUST FIND ONE HE'D LEAD ME TO THEIR HIDE-OUT, BUT...

...THERE ARE SO MANY PLACES IN THIS SECTION OF THE RIVER FOR THEM TO DUCK INTO! I'LL KEEP SEARCHING FOR AWHILE...

BUT THE BLUE BEETLE SEARCHES IN VAIN, FOR NOT TOO FAR AWAY...

WE CAME BACK EMPTY HANDED...

TRUE...BUT EVEN THIS FAILURE SERVED A PURPOSE! OUR NEXT JOB WILL MORE THAN MAKE UP FOR IT!

I'VE GOT A CAPER LINED UP THAT'S A *SURE THING*...SO DON'T SWEAT IT!

MIGHT AS WELL CALL IT A NIGHT... THEY GOT CLEAN AWAY!

NEXT DAY IN THE LAB OF TED KORD, ALIAS THE BLUE BEETLE...

DO US BOTH A FAVOR AND TELL US WHAT HAPPENED TO DAN GARRET ON PAGO ISLAND... BEFORE I FIND OUT FOR MYSELF ...AND MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT, KORD, I *WILL* FIND OUT!

SORRY, FISHER... THERE'S NOTHING TO TELL!

HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY, KORD...BUT YOU'LL BE SEEING A LOT OF ME 'TILL THIS MYSTERY IS CLEARED UP ONCE AND FOR ALL.

FISHER'S A GOOD COP... BUT HIS DIGGING IS KEEPING ME ON THE SPOT AND I CAN'T STOP HIM!

TED, YOU CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS... CONTINUALLY BEING SUSPECTED OF HAVING SOMETHING TO DO WITH DAN GARRET'S DISAPPEARANCE!

PLEASE, TRACEY, NOT YOU, TOO!

OH, TED, I LOVE YOU! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED, I STUCK BY YOU! BUT...BUT CLEAR THIS MESS UP... BEFORE IT'S *TOO LATE!*

IF SHE ONLY KNEW WHAT SHE'S ASKING ME TO DO!

I...I'M SORRY, TRACEY! YOU'LL JUST *HAVE TO TRUST ME!*

OH, TED, IF YOU DON'T PUT A STOP TO IT BY TELLING WHAT YOU KNOW, THESE SUSPICIONS WILL KEEP GROWING, UNTIL...

IF...IF I COULD ONLY TELL TRACEY EVERYTHING! BUT IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR TO INVOLVE HER IN THE SECRET OF PAGO ISLAND...

SHE'D HAVE TO KNOW EVERYTHING ...NOT ONLY ABOUT DAN GARRET BUT ALSO ABOUT ME BEING THE BLUE BEETLE.

TED, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'M FINE! BE RIGHT BACK.

I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE HIM TORTURING HIMSELF THIS WAY, BUT... *HOW* CAN I HELP HIM?

I...I HAD TO GET AWAY FROM TRACEY... BEFORE OUR EMOTIONS MADE ONE OF US SAY SOMETHING WE'D REGRET LATER.

THE *TWO* BLUE BEETLES IS *ONE* SECRET OF PAGO ISLAND...

THE OTHER SECRET IS SO DANGEROUS, IT... IT THREATENS *THE WORLD!*

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO HANDLE IT, BUT I'M SURE THAT TO REVEAL THIS SECRET NOW WOULD ACCOMPLISH NOTHING,.. AND *COULD* DO UNTOLD DAMAGE!

...SO I'LL JUST KEEP ON AS I HAVE BEEN! I ENJOY BEING THE BLUE BEETLE AND I'M GOING TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT,.. FOR AS LONG AS I CAN.

SOON AFTER, AT A WOMAN'S CLUB LUNCHEON...

I HAVE WONDERFUL NEWS, LADIES! TODD VAN III HAS GRACIOUSLY OFFERED THE USE OF HIS YACHT FOR A COSTUME BALL FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING FUNDS FOR OUR FAVORITE CHARITY.

WONDERFUL! TODD VAN KNOWS THE *RICHEST* PEOPLE!

I WOULDN'T MISS IT! A GOOD TIME FOR A GOOD CAUSE!

THAT TODD! HE REALLY KNOWS HOW TO LIVE IT UP!

WELL, SQUIDS, IS THAT CHARITY JOB MADE TO ORDER FOR US OR NOT?

WE CAN'T MISS, BOSS!

THE NIGHT OF THE CHARITY COSTUME BALL ARRIVES, AND...

LET'S GET ABOARD!

WE DON'T WANT TO LEAVE ANY MONEY BEHIND, DO WE? HA, HA, HA!

WE'RE ABOUT TO SHOVE OFF!

TODD, YOU'RE A GODSEND! YOU'LL COLLECT MORE FOR US TONIGHT THAN WE COULD IN A YEAR!

I LIKE TO DO WHAT I CAN ...FOR THE NEEDY!

JU'RE SO HARITABLE, TODD!

YES...YOU *COULD* SAY THAT! NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME...

I HAVE TO RAISE SOME MONEY FOR *MY* FAVORITE CHARITY...*ME!* AND TO THINK THAT...

...MY FATHER SAID I COULD NEVER MAKE A DIME ON MY OWN! AND HERE I AM, HEAD OF THE SQUIDS...MY OWN LITTLE BUSINESS...WITH SMALL RISKS AND *NO TAXES!*

WHO WOULD SUSPECT TODD VAN III, OF LEADING A BAND OF ROBBERS. NO ONE KNOWS I'VE BLOWN THE FORTUNE MY FATHER LEFT ME. THEY THINK I'M *LOADED!*

A FEW MORE JOBS LIKE THIS ONE TONIGHT AND I'LL BE *RICHER* THAN MY FATHER *EVER* WAS... WITHOUT HAVING TO WORK!

NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW! NOTHING!

LOOKS SAFE TO SURFACE!

I'M POSITIVE THE SQUIDS WILL TAKE A SHOT AT THE CHARITY TAKE ON TODD'S YACHT!

I WAS JUST LUCKY SPOTTING THEM THE LAST TIME...

...BUT THIS JOB IS LIKE A RIPE PLUM BEGGING TO BE PICKED! IT'S A NATURAL FOR THEM! IT'S JUST A MATTER OF WHEN!

THIS TIME I'LL BE READY FOR THEM.

I'D BETTER LAY BACK OUT OF SIGHT! IF THE SQUIDS ARE GOING TO ATTEMPT THIS JOB, THEY COULD HAVE SPOTTERS LOOKING FOR POSSIBLE TROUBLE!

I'LL LOCK ONE ANTENNA ON THE YACHT AND THE OTHER PROBING FOR SIGNS OF THE SQUIDS UNDERWATER!

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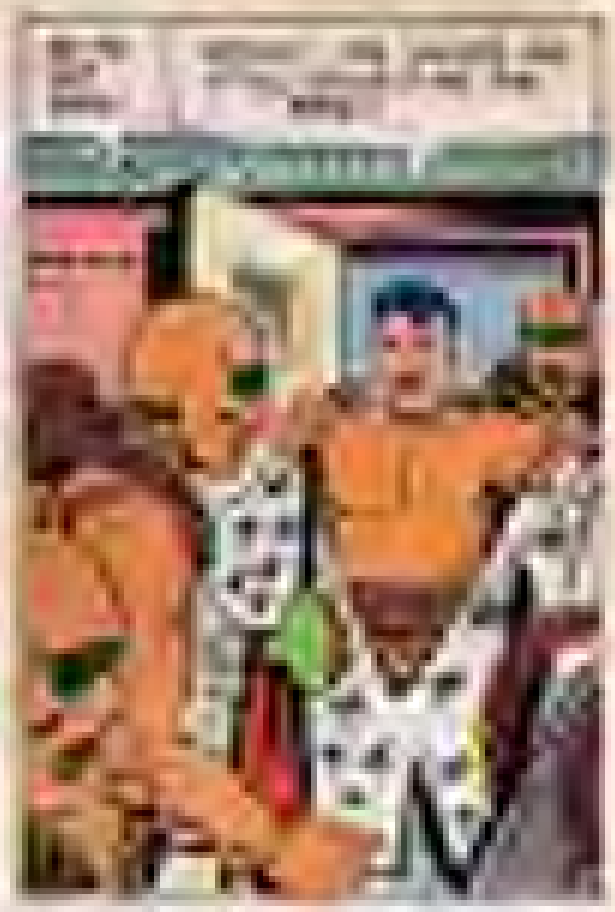
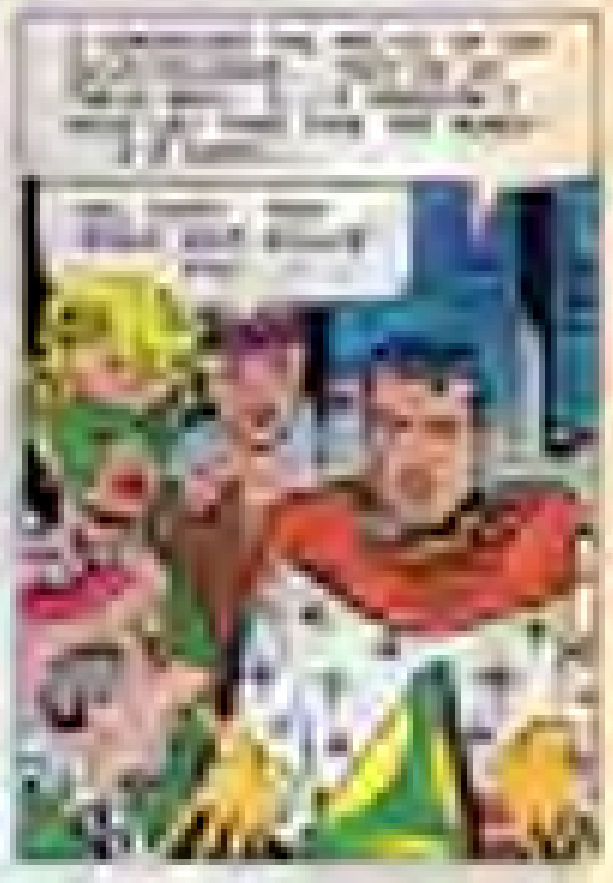
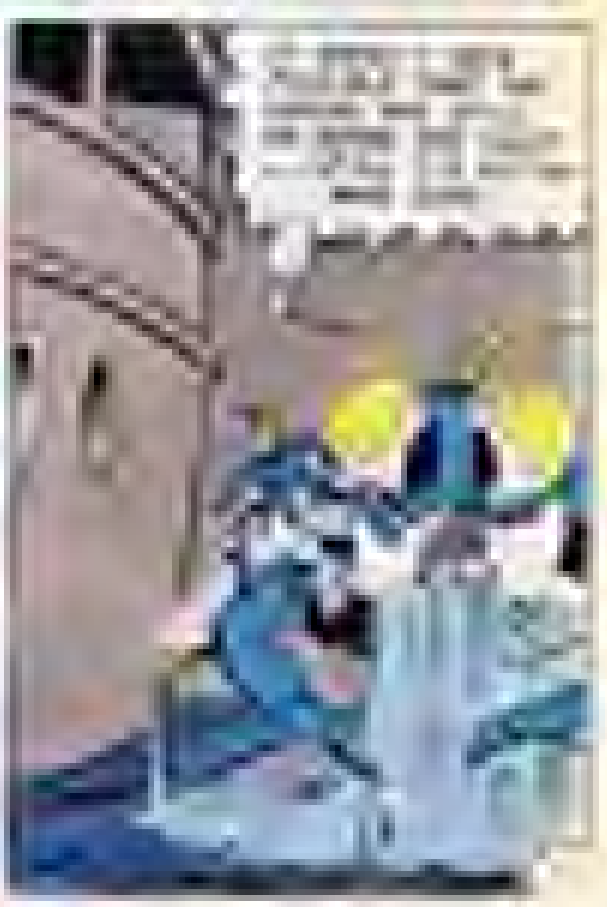
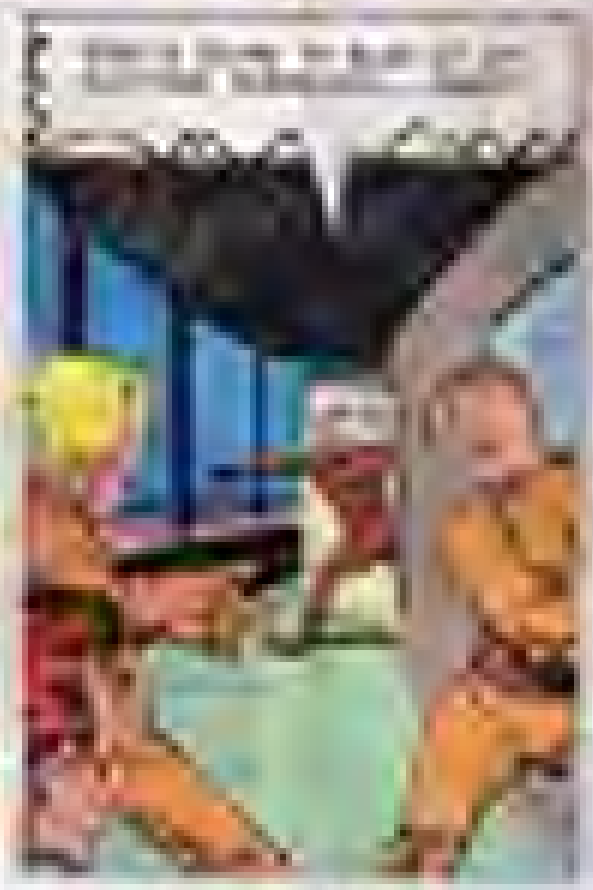








the BEETLE'S NEST

The following are excerpts from letters addressed to the Captain's Cabana after our revised and redirected slimey BLUE BEETLE first appeared as a companion/backup in CAPTAIN ATOM.

"...Blue Beetle is also great. I was hardly mad to see what connection he had with Dan Garret. I suggest you give him his own mag."

"As for the Blue Beetle, I couldn't think of a better costume in a million years."

"Steve Ditko's art [on] Blue Beetle [in Marvel Comics's Spider-Man] is just great! And the new Blue Beetle is spectacular!"

"The new Blue Beetle is GREAT! I love everything about him and I love Steve Ditko's artwork the most!"

"The new Blue Beetle is a great character with a beautiful costume. Congratulations to Steve Ditko and Gary Friedrich, this team should have been on the original Blue Beetle."

"In issue 33 of CAPTAIN ATOM, the Blue Beetle was fantastic. Steve Ditko's art could have surpassed Jack Kirby's art on the FANTASTIC FOUR."

"I think the new Blue Beetle is right, real hip, groovy."

"I want to learn more about Blue Beetle's amazing transformation." "CAPTAIN ATOM #33 was best. Especially the new Blue Beetle, he's terrific. Will you please give him his own mag and keep Ditko drawing him."

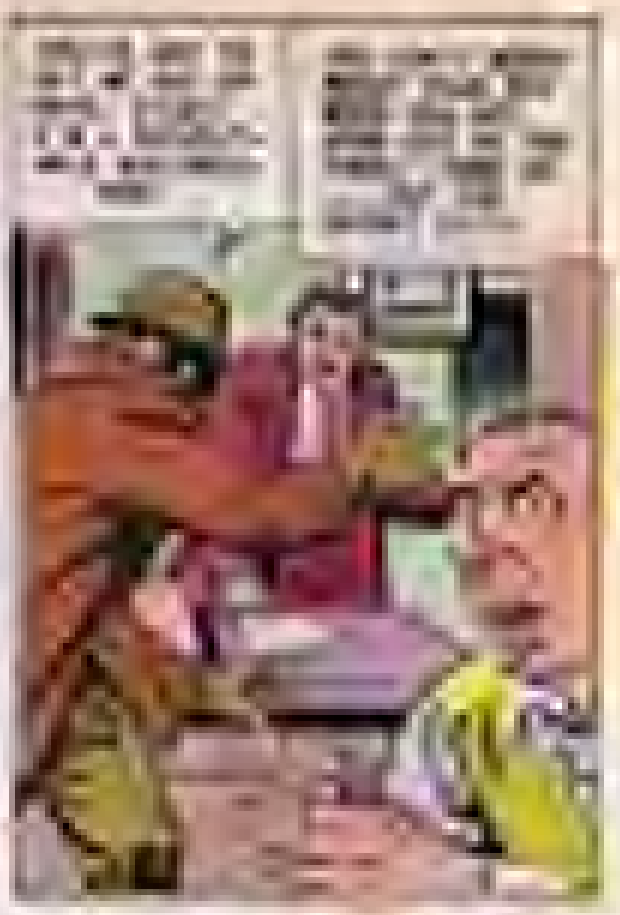
"The new Blue Beetle is great, even better than Captain Atom." It was primarily because of these comments and many, many more like them that we decided to have a go at it and give the Blue Beetle his own mag.

We are excited and hopeful about the Blue Beetle. Excited because of the interest he has aroused and hopeful that we can maintain that interest. From this point on, the fate of Blue Beetle is in your hands! Your letters will help determine the future of Blue Beetle!

Mail Nails

By many of your many hopes, Gary Friedrich has moved over to Marvel to write for Stan Lee! Our loss is their gain! We leave with our regrets of having lost a great writer but hope with [illegible] wishes for a very successful career.

QUESTION



I KNOW SOMEONE THEY'LL *HAVE* TO TALK TO...SOMEONE WHO WON'T GIVE THEM A CHOICE!

IT TOOK A GENIUS LIKE PROFESSOR RODOR TO DESIGN A MASK LIKE THIS! A MASK THAT YOU CAN SEE, BREATHE AND SPEAK THROUGH...

...AND YET STILL LOOK SOLID!

NOW TO RELEASE THE GAS! IT WILL CEMENT THE MASK TO MY FACE AND REACT - ON THE CHEMICALS PREVIOUSLY SPRAYED ON MY HAIR AND CLOTHING...

GIVING ME AN INSTANT NEW LOOK AND IDENTITY! NOW LET'S SEE IF *THE QUESTION* CAN GET SOME ANSWERS!

A MINUTE LATER, INSIDE...

WE GOTTA STAY COOPED UP AND SIT TIGHT TILL THIS BLOWS OVER. IT AL-WAYS DOES!

HEY NICK... *WHAT'S THAT?*

I DUNNO...LOOKS LIKE A PLAIN WHITE CARD... *HEY!!*

IT'S SMOKING!

LOOK...A QUESTION MARK! IT'S THE QUESTION'S CARD!

HE'S HERE??

CONTINUED AFTER THE NEXT PAGE

GET HIM! BUT NO GUNS...WE DON'T WANT THE COPS BUSTIN' IN HERE!

WHERE'S DICER? THE QUESTION WANTS THE ANSWERS!

NOBODY TALKS!

YOU PUNKS CAN MAKE IT AS HARD ON YOURSELVES AS YOU WANT!

GRAB HIM, MOE!

ANYONE CAN SPEAK UP WHEN THEY'RE READY!

BINGO! YOU TAGGED HIM!

NOW, YOU GUYS ...CLOBBER HIM!

I SAVED YOU FOR LAST! NOW TALK!

YOU'LL NEVER GET ME TO TELL YOU ANYTHING ...NEVER!

THEN YOU'LL NEVER TALK TO ANYONE AGAIN!

WHAT'S THAT COMIN' FROM YOUR HANDS?? NO...NO! I'LL TALK!

A HALF HOUR LATER...

I LEFT DICER'S BOYS TIED AND GAGGED SO THEY COULDN'T HAVE TIPPED HIM TO EXPECT ME BUT HE'S PROBABLY READY FOR ANYTHING!

HE'S ALONE AND SO EDGY HE LOOKS ABOUT READY TO CLIMB THE WALL! OH-OH, PHONE! WHO'D CALL HIM NOW?

IT'S ABOUT TIME!

BEEP

RING

YEH, IT'S ME...*WHAT?* LISTEN, PARTNER, I GOTTA SKIP TOWN SO YOU BRING THE DOUGH TO THE OLD STONE BRIDGE IN EXACTLY ONE HOUR, GET IT? REMEMBER, IF I GET NAILED, YOU AND YOUR RESPECTABLE REPUTATION GO DOWN WITH ME! *UNDERSTAND*, PARTNER? *BE THERE!*

LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE ELSE IS TIED IN WITH DICER! IF I PLAY THIS RIGHT, I CAN NAIL *BOTH* OF THEM!

FIVE MINUTES LATER, AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS...

THIS IS THE QUESTION, CAPT. LASH. DON'T TALK, JUST LISTEN...WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!

SHOOT!

THE APPOINTED HOUR...AT THE OLD STONE BRIDGE...

AREN'T YOU GOING TO COUNT IT?

NAW, I TRUST YOU, PARTNER! BUT, IT BETTER ALL BE HERE!

IT'S ALL THERE, DICER, BUT YOU'LL *NEVER GET TO USE IT!* I'M AFRAID THIS IS THE ONLY WAY...I CAN'T RISK HAVING YOU AROUND LOOSE... *TOO DANGEROUS!*

YOU DIRTY DOUBLE-CROSSER!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, BUDDY. WE'RE POLICE OFFICERS AND YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

HA, HA, HA! *SHOOT*, PARTNER!

JIM LARK OF W.W.B.! SO YOU SHOT THAT COP?

NO, NO! IT WAS DICER!

SHUT UP, YOU FOOL!

WHILE DOWN THE STREET...

WE HAVE THE WHOLE THING ON TAPE, VIC!

GOOD WORK, FRED! OKAY, AL LET'S HUSTLE BACK! WE'LL JUST MAKE TONIGHT'S NEWS-CAST!

W.W.B. T.V.

LATER...

HE CAN'T LET SAGE SHOW THAT TAPE OF LAPE[illegible] ARREST. HE WAS ONE OF US ...NOW WILL IT LOOK FOR US?

WHY GO TO EXTREMES? A BRIEF BULLETIN WILL DO!

LET'S VOTE ON IT!

DAD, YOU HAVE TO FORBID VIC FROM RUNNING IT...

...IT'LL MAKE US ALL LOOK BAD!

I WILL NOT SUPPRESS THE TRUTH! IT'S VIC'S SHOW...AND HIS DECISION!

IF THIS MESS DIDN'T INVOLVE SOMEONE YOU KNOW, THERE'D BE NO PROTEST! I'M *RUNNING THE TAPE.*

WE'LL HAVE HIS JOB YET!

NORA, EVERYONE'S AGAINST HIM! WHY IS HE DOING IT?

ASK YOUR SPEECH WRITER TO EXPLAIN IT, SYD. I STAND WITH VIC! NOW, I'VE GOT WORK TO DO!

TONIGHT YOU WILL WITNESS THE CLIMAX OF A POLICE HUNT WHICH SPELLED THE END OF ONE GAMBLING RING...

...WILL ANOTHER RISE IN IT'S PLACE? ONLY *YOU* CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION! NOW...*THE TAPE!*

ZZZZZ

HM, DIDN'T FINISH THE CROSSWORD!

HEY, MAC, PLACE A BET FOR ME!

NEXT ISSUE... SOARING OUT OF THE NIGHT... THE BANSHEE!

END